



Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

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March 27, 2001

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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RE: *Arbitration of Interconnection Agreements Between Verizon and AT&T, Cox and WorldCom, CC Docket Nos. 00-218, 00-249 and 00-251*

Dear Counsel:

This letter provides rulings on certain issues that the parties raised during the March 22, 2001 pre-filing conference in the above-captioned proceeding. The parties' questions were procedural in nature, relating primarily to the proposed schedule for the proceeding. The procedures set forth in the Common Carrier Bureau's February 1, 2001, Public Notice still apply, unless specifically modified below.¹

First, we discussed matters relating to the anticipated schedule, including the due dates for petitions, responses, testimony and other filings, as well as the timing of the evidentiary hearing itself. We have attached to this letter a schedule that attempts to accommodate the parties' concerns and the staff's requirements for the prompt and efficient disposition of this matter. As discussed during the conference, the date for filing petitions is set for April 23, 2001. Consistent with Verizon's concern about the need to respond to multiple petitions, its responses are due on May 31. The evidentiary hearing is scheduled to run from September 10 – 26, 2001.

¹ *Procedures Established for Arbitration of Interconnection Agreements Between Verizon and AT&T, Cox, and WorldCom, CC Docket Nos. 00-218, 00-249, 00-251, DA 01-270, Public Notice (CCB rel. February 1, 2001).*

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Second, several parties asked that they be allowed adequate time to make discovery requests, and to receive responses, before the deadline for filing Cost Studies. Also, Verizon asked that it be allowed adequate time to respond to the petitions for arbitration, without being required simultaneously to process discovery requests. Accordingly, the discovery period is scheduled to commence on the date that Verizon files its Response (May 31, 2001), with Cost Studies due one month later (July 2, 2001).

Third, the petitioners expressed their preference to file separate petitions for arbitration, with the intent subsequently to request consolidation. We find this to be a reasonable approach but, as discussed at the conference, direct the petitioners to identify the common issues in their petitions, to the extent possible. Along these lines, the parties shall assign shared issues the same number in their various petitions, to facilitate staff's assembly of a unified list of issues.

Fourth, recognizing that some of the material subject to discovery may already be in the possession, custody or control of the petitioners, they asked that Verizon agree to the use of such materials in this proceeding, while allowing for necessary protections for confidential information. We understand the parties to have agreed, during the pre-filing conference, that the petitioners will submit a list of the specific documents in this category that they seek to use in this proceeding. We further understand that, within 7 days of receipt of such a request, Verizon will either consent or object to use of the enumerated documents in this proceeding. If this does not comport with the understanding of any party, please contact us immediately.

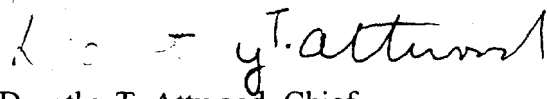
Fifth, we discussed briefly the inability of WorldCom and Verizon to agree on a document to serve as the starting point for the arbitration of their agreement. We directed that, as required in the February 1, 2001 Public Notice, petitions include a document "containing both the agreed upon language and the disputed language each party proposes" as well as a "list of every unresolved issue, categorized by subject matter, and the position of each of the parties on each issue." We further directed WorldCom not to include in its statement of unresolved issues the question of whether to start with Verizon's or WorldCom's preferred document.

Finally, now that the pre-filing conference has taken place, we consider this arbitration proceeding to be underway. We thus remind the parties, as explained in the February 1, 2001 Public Notice, that these proceedings are restricted for *ex parte* purposes, and that *ex parte* presentations are prohibited.

Letter Ruling
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Please direct any questions about this letter to Jeffrey Dygert, Assistant Bureau Chief, Common Carrier Bureau, at 202-418-7300, or Katherine Farroba, Deputy Chief, Policy and Program Planning Division, Common Carrier Bureau, at 202-418-1580.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "D. T. Attwood", written in a cursive style.

Dorothy T. Attwood, Chief
Common Carrier Bureau
Federal Communications Commission

Enclosure

cc: Vishwa Link, WorldCom
Mark Keffer, AT&T
Sandy Wilson, Cox Communications

**Anticipated Timeline For
Arbitration of an Interconnection Agreement**

Day	Anticipated Action	Date
(- 29)	Pre-Filing Conference	March 22
1	Parties file Petitions	April 23
38	Verizon files Response (and additional issues) Discovery begins	May 31
56	Parties file Joint Decision Point List (DPL) CLECs respond to Verizon additional issues	June 18
70	Cost Studies due (all parties)	July 2
78	Status Conference	July 10
87	Direct Testimony due	July 19
92	Last day to submit discovery requests	July 23
99	All Discovery responses due	August 7
101	Parties file Rebuttal Testimony All Discovery responses due	August 9
108	Parties file Revised Joint DPL (with cites to testimony) Parties file evidence and witness designations	August 16
121	Objections to evidence and witness designations due	August 22
136	Pre-hearing Conference	September 6
140-156	Evidentiary Hearing	September 10 – 26
168	Parties file post-hearing briefs	October 8